



# Project Recovery

Public Relations

## PRESS RELEASE

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**For Immediate Release**  
May 1, 2006

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### **PROJECT RECOVERY OFFERS SERVICES TO SENIOR CITIZENS AFFECTED BY HURRICANE KATRINA**

Today's senior citizens are a sturdy, reliable generation. They have survived everything from the Great Depression to world wars. However, when a disaster like Hurricane Katrina strikes, many may feel alone and vulnerable.

The effects of Hurricane Katrina can be seen throughout the community, especially in senior citizens. Each age group is vulnerable in unique ways to the stresses of a disaster. In senior citizens some disaster stress reactions may be experienced immediately, while others may appear many months later. It is important however to remember that many of their responses to the devastation of Katrina are common.

Project Recovery is a program to assist people in coping with the stress caused by Hurricane Katrina. Services are available to anyone affected by Hurricane Katrina, such as the local community and family members. Services are free and there are no medical or financial screenings to qualify to receive services.

"The insight and experience senior citizens offer Mississippi is invaluable," said Dr. Randy Hendrix, Executive Director of the Mississippi Department of Mental Health. "If someone, especially a senior citizen, is having difficulty recovering from Hurricane Katrina or having anxieties about the upcoming hurricane season, we encourage them to get assistance."

Some of the symptoms you or a loved one may be experiencing include:

- withdrawal and isolation,
- reluctance to leave home,
- relocation adjustment problems,
- worsening of chronic illness,
- sleep disorders,
- depression, and
- confusion – disorientation.

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It is important for older adults recovering from a disaster to talk about their feelings. Sharing their experiences can help them to understand they are not alone. Project Recovery is here to listen. The Project Recovery Helpline is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week at 1-866-856-3227. The Helpline can also connect senior citizens with a trained Outreach Worker in their area who can provide services.

Project Recovery is funded through a grant by the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and facilitated with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The project is a division of the Mississippi Department of Mental Health.

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